DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 222 302 RC 013 614

AUTHOR Ogletree, Earl J.; Janick, Joanne
TITLE A Survey of the Status of Migrant Education in Fifty States.
PUB DATE 2 Oct 82
NOTE 17p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Credits; Educational Policy; Flexible Scheduling; Graduation Requirements; *Institutional Cooperation; Interstate Programs; *Migrant Education; Questionnaires; *Secondary Education; State Surveys; Student Records; *Transfer Policy
IDENTIFIERS Credit Accrual; *United States

ABSTRACT

A 23-item questionnaire was sent to secretaries of education committees in state legislatures and departments of education of all 50 states to obtain data on (1) the basis of intrastate and interstate credit transfer, (2) how migrant students' academic program can be planned to provide continuity, (3) how credit transfers are made, (4) how many states and school districts have an interstate credit transfer policy and program, (5) whether local education agencies (LEA's) can exceed curricular mandates, (6) whether it is possible for school districts to offer flexible school schedules for migrant students, (7) how the credit transfer system and the education of migrant students can be improved, and (8) whether migrant students should be required to take minimum competency tests. Of the 40 states responding in the request to complete the questionnaire, 4 (California, Hawaii, South Dakota, and Rhode Island) declined for various reasons. Among the questionnaire responses were that basic skills were ranked as top priorities, with medical and nutritional needs second; 16 states had no interstate credit transfer policies or agencies; 8 states had policies and agencies for interstate credit transfers; 10 states had intrastate policies and agencies; and the most often stated basis for credit transfer decisions was the number of clock hours completed by the student and the grade received. (NQA)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

ED222302

# A SURVEY OF THE STATUS OF MIGRANT EDUCATION IN FIFTY STATES

BY

EARL J. OGLETREE

&

JOANNE JANICK

October 2, 1982

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Earl J. Ogletree

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

- ☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
- ☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

RC01 3614

# A SURVEY OF THE STATUS OF MIGRANT EDUCATION IN FIFTY STATES

BY

EARL J. OGLETREE

&

JOANNE JANICK

OCT 1982
RECEIVED
ERIC/CRESS

## Rationale

Children of migrant parents have serious educational deficiencies as a result of the lack of opportunity to attend and complete school. Ninety percent of migrant students fail to finish high school. One of the major problems is the difficulty of the migrant student accumulating enough credits to be promoted and to graduate from high school. This is compounded by the lack of exchange of credits between school districts within and between states. The Migrant Student Record Transfer System (MSRTS), established by Congress in 1966 coordinates migrant programs and academic credits. However, the number of participating school districts is limited, affecting the MSRTS effectiveness as a clearinghouse.

## Objectives

1) What is the basis of intra and interstate credit transfer?
2) How can migrant students' academic program be planned to provide continuity?
3) How are credit transfers made?
4) How many states and school districts have an interstate credit transfer policy and program?
5) Can L.E.A's. exceed curricular mandates?
6) Is it possible for school districts to offer flexible school schedules for migrant students?

7) How can the credit transfer system and the education of migrant students be improved?

8) Should migrant students be required to take minimum competency tests?

Method of Data Collection

The data were obtained via survey. A 23 item questionnaire was sent to Secretaries of Education Committees in State Legislatures and Departments of Education of fifty states. In many cases the questionnaire was channelled to others including state level personnel specifically involved in migrant education. (See questionnaire in Appendix).

Of the forty (40) states responding in the request to complete this questionnaire, four (4) declined. In the case of California the researcher was referred to the Interstate Migrant Program in Oneonta, New York which has been active in assessing the status of migrant education at all levels.* Two of the other three states, Hawaii and South Dakota, cited the lack of a significant migrant student population as the reason for their lack of response. Hawaii has no migrant student population and South Dakota has only five migrant students enrolled in its schools. Finally Rhode Island responded that, due to the newness of their migrant program, they were unable to provide the feedback requested.

Because more than one questionnaire was sent to each state it was to be expected that in some cases more than one reply would be received for a single state. This occurred in five states: Arizona, Florida, Pennsylvania, Indiana, and Washington. It is interesting to note that in these cases, with the exception of Indiana, the responses to the questions were in agreement over seventy percent of the time. In the cases of disagreement, this could

* Director of Interstate Migrant Programs, Oneonta, N.Y. did not have the intrastate data requested by the researcher.

be attributed to personal opinion and to the altered perspective of the respondent depending on the agency which is represented. Indiana was a special case since one response from that state was in the form of a referral to the Interstate Migrant Program mentioned previously and the other was a completed questionnaire.

Results of Study

Analysis of the questionnaire indicated that the overwhelming majority of the states responding define migrant students primarily on the basis of federal regulations--specifically in accordance with the definition in Chapter I, ECIA (formerly Title I, ESEA) and the regulations for the implementation of that Act. Others cited state regulations which may or may not be grounded in federal regulations.

The manner in which students are recruited is similiarly uniform. Twelve (12) of the eighteen (18) states responding to this question indicated trained recruiters as the method employed. The recruitment was a well defined process including the hiring and training of local recruiters who are knowledgable about the geographic area, the community and the mobility of migrants in the area; referrals of migrant students based on school records and assessment by school personnel; and visits to camps and homes in order to procure eligibility forms from parents of eligible migrants. Other states used the services of a Migrant Record Transfer System (MSRTS) clerk or community liaison aides to obtain signed eligibility forms from parents.

When asked to give the definition of migrant student needs and priorities in their state, respondents ranked basic skills as the top priority with medical and nutritional needs second. Also mentioned repeatedly by several

states were: the national priorities defined in the Federal Register, special education programs to meet the needs of migrant students, credit accrual for graduation, continuity of educational experience, self-acceptance and acceptance by others, staff development, attention to individual needs, and the importance of defining needs locally. Other priorities stated by one or two states were: infant day care, preschools, transportation, assessment of educational needs, oral language and reading instruction, dropout prevention, survival skills, summer programs, vocational guidance, identification of migrant students, assessment of health needs, education of formerly migrant students, involvement in MSRTS, yearly needs assessment, and parental involvement.

Surprisingly dropout prevention was indicated as a priority in only one state. Greater insight is given into this situation by the responses of each state to the question of percentage of migrant student dropouts. In all but nine (9) out of the thirty-six (36) states responding to this question this information was not available to the respondent. Two other states indicated that they serve only summer migrant students and therefore do not have this information available to them. Of those states that did indicate a dropout rate for migrant students, Indiana and Virginia showed the lowest with a rate of one percent; Texas showed three percent; Illinois, twenty-five percent; Washington, sixty-five to seventy percent; Pennsylvania, ninety percent; and Utah, ninety-five to ninety-nine percent. When a reason was given for the unavailability of this data, the fact that the state responding was a receiving state and not the home state was the reason given in every case.

Statistics for migrant students completing the GED were similiarly lacking. Twenty-eight (28) of the thirty-six (36) states responding to that question indicated that the information was unavailable. Two (2) others cited the summer only nature of their migrant student program as the reason for their lack of response. Of the remaining Vermont indicated that ninety-five percent of its migrant students have GED as a goal and work toward it; Illinois showed seven percent completing GED; Texas, one to two percent; Pennsylvania, one percent; and Indiana and Virginia, one percent.

On the question of developing a migrant student academic program to provide continuity, eighteen (18) states felt that this was possible; eleven (11) responded with a qualified yes; three (3) with a qualified no; three (3) said no; and one (1) was unsure. Of those states which responded that such programs were possible several including Mississippi, Oregon, Washington, and Minnesota cited the success of their own interstate programs as a basis for their positive outlook. Those who qualified their positive responses gave the following as important issues to be considered: 1) since the various state and local educational agencies all have their own regulations to be followed, there would be a necessity for close cooperation and coordination between the sending state, the home school district, and the receiving state; 2) all school and instructional personnel would have to be well versed in this system; 3) the time of arrival and departure of a migrant student would have a marked effect on the continuity of his instruction; and 4) certain specific curricula lend themselves better to continuity of subject matter than others.

Those states that answered with a qualified no felt that in view of the fifty different state educational systems and the more than 16,000 local

school districts, all with considerable autonomy, it would be very difficult to establish such a program.

With regard to the question of interstate credit transfer policies and agencies, sixteen (16) of the thirty-six (36) states responding to this question indicated that no such policies or agencies existed in their states. Similiarly fourteen (14) of these states had no intrastate credit transfer policies and agencies. Eight (8) of the respondents stated that they do have policies and agencies for interstate credit transfers while ten (10) indicated that they have intrastate policies and agencies. Two (2) states felt that these questions did not apply to them since they are receiving states and not home states for migrant students. Five (5) other states indicated that they have policies but no agencies for both interstate and intrastate transfers and only one state responded that, while agencies exist for both types of transfers, there are no pplicies. Two (2) states indicated that there are unwritten policies and that local school officials act as the agents in instances of both interstate and intrastate credit transfers.

The most often stated basis for credit transfer decisions was the number of clock hours completed by the student and the grade received. Credit hours recorded on student transcripts were the basis of this information in most instances. Rewarding students for work completed and enabling students to graduate were also important considerations. The Local Education Authorities (LEA), including counselors, vice-principals, and principals, were most often responsible for making decisions about credit transfer. In making these decisions they took into account the course content as inferred by the course titles, the needs of the student, and the standing of the school from which credit was being transferred. Some other means by which these decisions were

made were joint agreement between State Education Authorities (SEA) and LEA, and through migrant counselors, teachers and the MSRTS.

In fact twenty-five (25) of the thirty-six (36) states responding to this question indicated that the LEA bore the primary responsibility for decisions regarding credit transfers. Two (2) states indicated that the SEA was responsible and seven were ambivalent.

On the question of flexible scheduling to accommodate the needs of migrant students, responses to this indicated that ten (10) of the thirty-six (36) states answering this question made this type of scheduling available to their migrant students. Five (5) states indicated that this was available on a limited basis to all students where cooperative education program are in force. These would be applicable to migrant students as long as they are working within an educationally supervised area. Fourteen (14) states responding indicated that flexible scheduling was available at the discretion of the LEA. One (1) state indicated that this flexibility is not offered outright but that each situation would be dealt with individually if this option was requested. Four (4) other states indicated that the question did not apply since they service these students only in the summer months.

This willingness to be flexible was not seen in the area of adjusting the number of credit units to meet the needs of the migrant student. Twenty-three (23) of the thirty-six (36) states responding to this question indicated that this was not their policy. Five (5) indicated that this was the province of the LEA and that adjustments were permissible. Two (2) respondents indicated flexibility at the state level in this regard. In one (1) case this was based on the number of hours the student had participated in the course and a percentage of the grade. The other state indicated that night classes

and tutoring were the method employed to adjust the number of credit units needed for graduation. The response of one (1) state was ambivalent and three (3) states felt that the question did not apply to them since they are receiving states.

The question of graduation and the manner in which credits are accrued is seen as a central issue for migrant students by many. In all but three of the thirty-eight (38) states responding to this question the SEA established the minimum requirements for graduation for that state. In all of these cases the LEA had the option and in a few cases was encouraged to exceed or supplement these. The requirements obviously varied from state to state and also within states. But the indications were that credit units earned were the single most important basis for meeting the requirements for graduation though difficulty arises in comparing credit units for various states since all states do not define a credit unit in the same manner. Even so the most often used definition was the Carnegie Unit and the states using this measure required as many as 21CU to as few as 15CU for graduation. Twenty-six (26) of the states responding indicated that the required number of days of attendance varied from district to district but the average minimum for those indicating a statewide minimum was 170 days. Passing grades were likewise, for the most part, the domain of the LEA. However, in the majority of the states where the decision of passing grade is statewide, the minimum passing grade was "D."

It has been suggested that competency testing would seem to be the answer to the problem of providing uniformity and continuity for migrant students in order to afford them the opportunity of completing high school. Of the states responding only three felt that minimum competency testing should not

be required for migrant students in states that require these tests of all their other students. These states indicated the following as the reasons for their responses: 1) not realistic for students who do not complete a school year in their home school; and 2) because of student mobility. On the other hand, the responses to the question of requiring competency testing for migrant students in states which otherwise do not require such were almost unanimously "no." Three states that answered "yes" gave the following as their reasons: 1) as long as the school from which they intend to graduate requires it, the receiving school should administer the tests; 2) this would allow students credit for courses in which they have demonstrated competency even though they have not fulfilled the time requirement for hours of instruction; and 3) the mobility factor makes it essential that these students have at least minimum competency in the basic skills to graduate.

Naturally the acceptance of uniform graduation requirements would facilitate the completion of high school by migrant students. However, according to the results of this survey, local autonomy and variances in the requirements of home-based schools make this all but impossible. Other obstacles cited by several states included the following: 1) non-acceptance of partial work completed in receiving states; 2) short time spent in individual district by migrant students, unwillingness on the part of some states to engage in reciprocity; and 3) and the same difficulties that would arise for all students. Obstacles cited less often were:

1. bureaucratic and public indifference.
2. political obstacles too great to enumerate.
3. belief in different grade requirements for migrant and non-migrant students.

4. difficulty in equative course content on the basis of course title only.
5. lack of effective communication.
6. lack of local control of the school system.
7. reluctance on the part of some school districts to accept flexible scheduling.
8. lack of understanding of the plight of the migrant student
9. low priority based on the relatively few number of migrant students.
10. variations in course offering, content, and sequence from state to state.
11. acceptance of competency test results within and between states.

The establishment of an intrastate clearinghouse for migrant student transfer credit in each state is another way in which some of the confusion over transfer of credit from district to district and from state to state for students who do not attend school in a district for a full term might be alleviated. However, eighteen (18) out of the thirty-six (36) states responding to the question: "Is there or should there be an intrastate migrant credit transfer clearing house?" gave a negative response. Only two (2) states indicated a reason for their responses. These included the lack of intrastate movement of migrant students and therefore the lack of a need for such an agency and the short school term for summer students in states where migrant students are in residence only during the summer. Only nine (9) states indicated that a clearinghouse has been or should be established. Three (3) responded that a clearinghouse could be helpful in some cases if it would facilitate communication and a more comprehensive evaluation system. Four (4) states indicated that the MSRTS should serve in this capacity.

Two (2) other states responded, "Don't know" to the question.

On the question of what percentage of schools which teach migrant students do not participate in MSRTS, the responses indicate that in nineteen (19) of the thirty-six (36) states responded that zero percent of the migrant students do not participate in this program, i.e., all schools which have identified migrant children participate in these states. Eight (8) other states indicated that all students attending schools which receive federal funds for migrant education under Chapter I participate in MSRTS. Smaller districts or districts with a smaller enrollment of migrant students may function without federal aid and MSRTS. Five (5) states indicated that this information was not readily available. One (1) state responded that the percentage of schools not having MSRTS records on site but having migrant students enrolled is about forty percent overall and eighty-five percent at the secondary level only. Two (2) states indicated that the percentage was between twenty (20) and twenty-two (22) percent. One (1) other state indicated that the percentage varies from SEA to SEA.

Nineteen (19) states felt that participation in MSRTS was not a problem for them. For those states which felt that this was a problem the following solutions were offered: 1) in states where the migrant child education program is strictly voluntary on the part of the LEA, the local school administration is asked to give assurances of participation in order to receive funding. Hopefully the benefits will be clear to the LEA; 2) it should be required by state law; 3) all students should be signed up in a school base listing system. Then they should be entered into the MSRTS

computer; 4) state staff should resolve this problem; and 5) this problem cannot be resolved without additional funding.

Summary and Conclusions

Resolution of the credit transfer problem of migrant students lies primarily in improved communication on an intra and interstate basis, acceptance by all states of the revised MSRTS which will be operational Sept. 1, 1982, and some form of agreement on policy and procedures on credit transfer between states and LEAs. Other suggestions offered were: increased funding, uniform graduation requirements, relaxation of requirements by some states, education of school personnel in the plight of the migrant student, acceptance by home schools of credits from receiver schools, and having teachers specify objectives which when met (even if texts and assignments have to be taken along on work trips) would entitle the student to credit. One respondent felt that there is no workable solution unless states are willing to accept a separate set of graduation requirements for migrant students.

The major problem of credit transfer for migrant students is the lack of a common credit unit system and the lack of a clear and common policy and procedures within and between states. One solution is create or designate a high school or institution that would serve as a national secondary school. Its responsibility would be to obtain transcripts and accrued credits of migrant students from the SEAs, LEAs and local high schools, etc. and translate or interpret the credit units into a "national credit unit." Also a common "national credit unit" (similar to the Carnegie unit or some other common criteria) should be established to provide some uniformity. The G.E.D. might be used as an alternative national competency test to provide some form of uniformity in the credit transfer system.

# APPENDIX

MIGRANT STUDENT CREDIT TRANSFER

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Is it possible to develop migrant students' academic programs to provide continuity?

2. What is the basis for credit transfer decisions?

3. How are credit transfers decisions made?

4. Who makes credit transfer decisions?

5. Does your state have interstate credit transfer policies and agencies?

6. Does your state have an intrastate credit transfer policy and agency?

7. Who has responsibility for intrastate and interstate credit transfers?

8. Is or should there be an intrastate migrant credit transfer clearinghouse?

9. Does SEA establish minimum graduation requirements or is this the province of the LEA?

10. If the SEA has minimum graduation requirements, may an LEA exceed them?

11. Should migrant students be required to take minimum competency tests in states which require competency tests? Why?

12. Should migrant students be required to take minimum competency tests in states which do not require minimum competency tests? Why?

13. What is your state's definition of migrant students' needs and priorities?

14. What is the ratio or percentage between current migrant students and those who have dropped out of school?

15. What percentage complete G.E.D. programs?

16. What are the number of credit units, days of attendance and passing grade required to complete high school?

17. Do schools in your state offer flexible schedules for migrant students to work and to go to school?

18. Do you adjust the number of credit units to meet the needs of migrant students to complete your graduate requirements? How?

19. How do you define and identify migrant students?

20. What are the obstacles to acceptance of uniform graduation requirements for migrants?

21. What percentage of schools which teach migrant students do not participate in MSRTS?

22. How have or would you resolved this problem?

23. What is the solution to resolving the credit transfer problem of migrant students?

Return Completed Questionnaire To:

Earl J. Ogletree, Ed.D.
Professor of Education
Chicago State University
95th and King Drive
Chicago, Illinois 60628